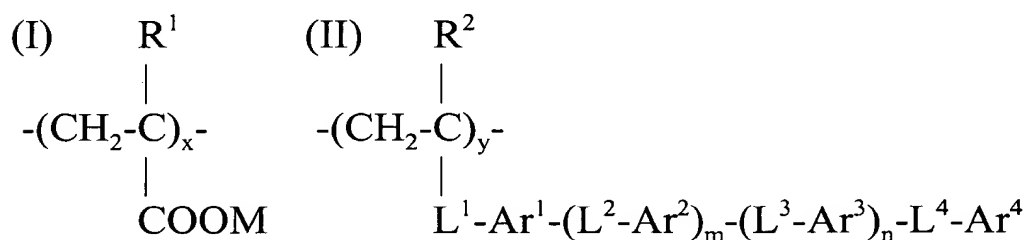


LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): A process for orienting discotic liquid crystal molecules, comprising the steps of: coating a solution of a copolymer comprising repeating units represented by the formula (I) and repeating units represented by the formula (II) on a support to form a coated layer; rubbing a surface of the coated layer to form an orientation layer; coating a solution containing discotic liquid crystal molecules on the orientation layer to orient the discotic liquid crystal molecules so that an average inclined angle of discotic planes of the discotic liquid crystal molecules is in the range of 50° to 90° and that an average direction of optical axes of the discotic liquid crystal molecules is essentially parallel to a rubbing direction of the orientation layer:



in which each of R¹ and R² independently is hydrogen, a halogen atom or an alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms; M is an alkali metal ion; L¹ is a divalent linking group selected from the group consisting of -O-, -CO-, -NH-, an alkylene group and a combination thereof; each of L², L³ and L⁴ independently is a single bond or a divalent linking group selected from the group consisting of -O-, -CO-, -NH-, -SO₂-, an alkylene group, an alkenylene group, an alkynylene group and a combination thereof; each of Ar¹, Ar², Ar³ and Ar⁴ independently is an aromatic ring,

which can have a substituent group; each of m and n independently is 0 or 1; x is 10 to 95 mole %; and y is 5 to 90 mole %.

Claim 9 (Original): The process as defined in claim 8, wherein at least one of L^2 , L^3 and L^4 is a single bond or an alkynylene group.

Claim 10 (Original): The process as defined in claim 9, wherein at least one of L^2 , L^3 and L^4 is ethynylene.

Claim 11 (Original): The process as defined in claim 8, wherein the discotic liquid crystal molecules have polymerizable groups, and the alignment of the liquid crystal molecules is fixed by polymerization after the liquid crystal molecules are oriented.

Claim 12 (Original): The process as defined in claim 11, wherein the copolymer has polymerizable groups, and the alignment of the liquid crystal molecules is fixed by polymerization between the liquid crystal molecules and the copolymer after the liquid crystal molecules are oriented.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process as defined in claim 8, wherein the solution containing discotic liquid crystal molecules is coated on the orientation layer to orient all the discotic liquid crystal molecules essentially vertically.